

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9751

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET SCULPTOR NEIZVESTNY COMMENTS ON EXIT REFUSAL

1. SOVIET SCULPTOR ERNST NEIZVESTNY TOLD EMBOFF THAT IN OVIR INTERVIEW JULY 7, HE WAS REFUSED PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. NEIZVESTNY HAD REQUESTED PERMISSION FOUR MONTHS AGO AND THOUGHT HE WOULD RECEIVE IT, THANKS TO HIS POLITICAL CONTACTS AND BECAUSE HE WAS ASSOCIATED NEITHER WITH JEWISH ACTIVISTS NOR OTHER DISSIDENT SOVIET GROUPS.

2. NEIZVESTNY SAID THAT THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR THE REFUSAL WAS FACT THAT HE AND HIS WIFE, ALTHOUGH NOT LIVING TOGETHER, WERE NOT DIVORCED. OVIR TOLD HIM THAT A DIVORCE "COULD" RESULT IN REVIEW OF HIS CASE. SOMEWHAT CONFUSINGLY, HE NOTED ALSO THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT CASE NOW DEAD FOR THE YEAR. HE ADDED THAT WHILE HE AND HIS WIFE HAD NOT LIVED TOGETHER FOR MANY YEARS, NEITHER WISHED A DIVORCE, AND BOTH FELT RESPONSIBLE FOR A SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD DAUGHTER. MOREOVER, BOTH OBJECTED STRENUOUSLY TO A DIVORCE FOR "RAISON D'ETAT." ALTHOUGH HIS WIFE IS NOW PREPARED TO GRANT NEIZVESTNY A DIVORCE, HE IS AFRAID THAT WHOLE ISSUE WAS MERELY PRETEXT FOR REFUSAL AND OVIR COULD FIND NEW AND DIFFERENT PRETEXTS SHOULD DIVORCE TAKE PLACE. THERE IS APPARENTLY NO QUESTION OF SUPPORT FOR MRS. NEIZVESTNY AND THE CHILD; NEIZVESTNY, A WEALTHY MAN, HAS ESTABLISHED SEVERAL SIZEABLE ACCOUNTS IN HIS WIFE'S

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NAME.

3. NEIZVESTNY ADDED THAT HIS DIFFICULTIES ARE INCREASING BECAUSE HE IS ABOUT TO LOSE STUDIO. HE HAD THEORETICALLY BEEN EVICTED EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 28, 1975 BUT HAD BEEN INFORMALLY TOLD THAT HE NEED NOT IN FACT MOVE. NOW HE HAS BEEN TOLD THAT OTHER SHOE IS ABOUT TO DROP. HE HAS SENT ALL HIS WORK TO THE DACHA OF KHRUSHCHEV'S ON SERGEY, AND CAN LEAVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. HOWEVER, HE NOTES THAT, WHILE HE CAN AFFORD TO LIVE AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS AN APARTMENT, HE CANNOT DO HIS CREATIVE WORK EITHER THERE OR IN THE DACHA. HE THEREFORE FACES "CREATIVE DATH."

4. IN THE FIRST HOURS AFTER REFUSAL, NEIZVESTNY "IN BLIND FURY" GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT PETER OSNOS. HE ALSO THOUGHT TO WRITE OPEN LETTER TO PODGORNYY AND OTHER LEADING FIGURES, BUT HAS NOW COOLED DOWN. HE DOES NOT REGRET THE OSNOS ARTICLE SINCE HE FEELS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC BE INFORMED OF HIS CASE. HE REGRETS, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN INACCURACIES IN THE OSNOS ARTICLE. HE SAYS, FOR INSTANCE, THAT DIVORCE QUESTION IS HANDLED BADLY IN ARTICLE, AS IS QUESTION OF HIS JEWISHNESS AND HIS REASONS FOR WISHING TO EMIGRATE.

5. NEIZVESTNY SAYS HE NOW PREPARED TO WAIT A FEW WEEKS BEFORE TAKING NEXT STEP. HE WOULD LEAVE IMMEDIATELY EVLSN AT THE COST OF ABANDONING ALL HIS WORK. HE SAYS THAT HE IS NOT, NOWEVER, PREPARED TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICES TO HIS HONOR BY AGREEING TO COOPERATE WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES. HE SAYS HE REALIZES THAT THIS PLACES HIM IN A MORALLY SOUND BUT PROBABLY UNREASONABLE POSITION AND REVEALED THAT HE COULD COME TO CHANGE THIS VIEW AS THE FULL GRAVITY OF THE REFUSAL SINKS IN. NEIZVESTNY SAID THAT THE ATTACHED SOME HOPE TO EFFECT IN U.S. OF OSNOS ARTICLE AND TO HELSINKI SUMMIT MEETING "WHICH WAS TO TREAT PRECISELY SUCH MATTERS AS EMIGRATION." HE SAYS HE NOW DOES NOT INTEND TO ACT HASTILY.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE, EXCERPTS FROM WHICH WERE REPORTED IN USINFO.
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